



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Color Country District Office

Cedar City Field Office

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www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar_city.html



In Reply Refer To:

4720 (UTC010)

December 18, 2015

Dear Reader:

The Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Sulphur Wild Horse Gather Plan DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2015-0011-EA is available for review and comment on-line at http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/wild_horse_and_burro.html or on the ePlanning at <https://goo.gl/fo638L>. Hard copies are available from the Cedar City Field Office at the above address.

This document is tiered to the Pinyon Management Framework Plan (1983), Warm Springs Resource Management Plan (1987) and multiple previous wild horse gather EAs. If a determination is made that implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in “significant environmental impacts” a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) would be prepared to document that determination and a Decision Record issued providing the rationale for approving the chosen alternative.

The Sulphur HMA is located in western Iron, Beaver, and Millard counties, Utah approximately 50 miles west of Minersville, Utah in the Indian Peak and Mountain Home mountain ranges. The Sulphur HMA contains approximately 265,675 acres, with elevations ranging from 9,790 feet on top of Indian Peak to 6,000 feet in the valley floors.

This EA has been prepared to analyze the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Cedar City Field Office (CCFO) proposal to implement the Sulphur Wild Horse Gather Plan. The purpose of the project is to achieve a thriving natural ecological balance, achieve and maintain wild horse Appropriate Management Levels (AML), collect information on herd characteristics, determine herd health, maintain sustainable rangelands, and maintain a healthy wild horse population within the Sulphur HMA. The proposal includes gathering and removing excess wild horses and the application of population growth suppression methods over a ten year period. To improve public health and safety, construction of a fence is also proposed along HWY 21 from the middle of North Pine Valley to Mormon Gap. This project would reduce the number of wild horse and vehicle collisions that occur in that area.

The current AML of 165-250 wild horses for the Sulphur HMA was set the Sulphur Wild Horse Herd Area Management Plan (1987). This AML is in conformance with the Pinyon Management Framework Plan (1983) and the Warm Springs Resource Management Plan (1987). Since

completion of these plans, the BLM has attempted maintain the wild horse population on the HMA within the AML.

Wild horse populations above AML compete for forage, water, and cover allocated to wildlife and livestock. High populations of wild horses impact riparian areas with increased trailing, vegetative use, and trampling. Wild horses will drive away livestock and native ungulates from watering and feeding areas.

In order to meet local and national wild horse program goals, the proposal includes the following objectives:

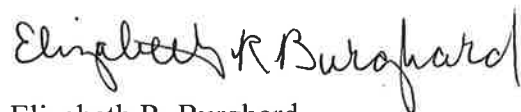
- maintain wild horse populations within AML;
- slow population growth to maximize the time between gathers to remove excess horses;
- reduce the number of wild horses being placed in short-term holding or long-term pastures;
- improve public health and safety along Hwy 21;
- remove wild horses that occupy areas outside the Sulphur HMA boundary; and
- maintain a thriving, natural ecological balance and multiple use relationship on public lands in the Sulphur HMA.

Comments on the Environmental Assessment for the Sulphur Wild Horse Gather Plan DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2015-0011-EA will be accepted for 30 days until January 19, 2016. Interested individuals should mail written comments to the BLM Cedar City Field Office, 176 E. DL Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah 84721 Attn: Cedar City Field Office Manager or send email to: blm_ut_sulphur@blm.gov. Any other comments will not be accepted. Comments need to be post marked or emailed to blm ut sulphur@blm.gov no later than January 20, 2016.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety."

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Cedar City Field Office, at (435) 865-3000.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth R. Burghard
Cedar City Field Office Manager